

ABSTRACT

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The Sound of Smoke is a visually stunning one-man theatrical event, which uses projections and text to challenge the audience's conception of sexuality, truth, and identity in the modern world. It features dance movement, music, and imagery to illuminate a dark period in our history that in many ways mirrors our world today. Set in 1930's Germany, the audience witnesses an environment of glorious decay right on the edge of collapse as they follow a transsexual who loves too hard and loses it all in the search for her identity at the end of the world.

THE SOUND OF SMOKE; A LOOK BACK

By

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Dedication

To the Priestess of Depravity

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Chapter 1: A Beginning

Early in the Spring of 2010 Masters of Fine Arts in Performance candidate Teresa Ann Virginia Bayer handed me a book entitled *The 7 Addictions and 5 Professions of Anita Berber: Weimar Berlin's Priestess of Depravity* by Mel Gordon. The book itself was black with thin stylized purple and green swirls of smoke encircling a ghostly black and white figure clad in only a corset, desperately clutching a black drape curtain. The figure seemed to be staring out into the abyss, beckoning and luring readers to its shores like some dark siren from a different planet. I was hooked. This was my first introduction to Anita Berber, a woman ahead of her time who would change my life.

As a performer I find that I am drawn to stories that exist in the extremes of the human experience. I am curious about people who live fearless lives and who suffer for it. When I picked up that black book and began to leaf through it, the joy, sadness, and reckless abandon jumped off the page at me. I love characters and stories that grab you by the neck and refuse to let go; larger than life people who have fashioned themselves into something greater than their original parts. I truly believe that theatre should be entertainment first and foremost, but it should also say something. Theatre should make you think and question something bigger about yourself. Whether it is your perception of reality or societal norms, an audience should leave challenged and entertained.

As an artist I have always been interested in stories from the LGBTQ experience - my experience. As a member of that community I often feel misrepresented, marginalized, and underserved in our depictions on film and stage.

Daniel Mangin in his article “The History of Lesbians and Gays on Film” writes:

When Gays and lesbians do appear on screen, it is more often than not in ways that uphold stereotypical notions, such as the “pansy” male or the “hardboiled” woman. In this respect, their treatment parallels that of other cultural groups- most notably racial minorities, but also, for example women and the handicapped- all of whose depth and variety of experience have been sacrificed over the years to the perceived requirements of a largely white, Christian, middleclass audience. (Mangin, 50)

I was interested in creating a character that would break out of those “stereotypical” roles, something far different from the characters in *The Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*. I was inspired by the documentary *Paris is Burning*, the film *Hedwig and The Angry Inch*, and the stage show *Cabaret*. I knew there must be some nugget of uncharted territory between those three divergent works.

After reading Gordon’s book, the windows opened and I became ravenous for more. I read everything I could find on the period, Weimar Germany, and the culture of the time. I immediately began making connections between 1920s Berlin and modern society. Weimar Germany was a time of excess and greed much like the America I grew up in, with corruption and fundamentalism lurking just below the surface. I made instant correlations between Anita Berber and Lady Gaga; A woman who mixes sexuality, fame, and art with an unnerving fluidity. Anita Berber’s entire life was a giant performance piece designed to entice and seduce people into her dark embrace, much like Gaga who won’t appear publicly without the persona she’s

created. I wanted to explore this dynamic of existing in two different spheres at once: public and private, and what can happen when the public becomes the private. Anita Berber allowed the outside world into her private consciousness in her ever-expanding desire for fame and glory. Every moment for her became a performance. She lost her identity in the created façade of debauchery, cocaine, and morphine injections, slowly slipping away until nothing was left. I wonder if it is a choice to lose yourself in your art? How are we forced to perform for others in our daily lives in order to survive? What did Anita sacrifice in order to achieve her own brand of immortality? What happens when our formed identity is ripped away from us? What is left? These heavy issues of identity keep coming back over and over as I read about this remarkable time and astounding woman who lived hard and lost it all.

At the beginning I felt adrift in a sea of possibilities and inspirations. I decided that I wouldn't play Anita. I couldn't play Anita. To me she was a goddess, an idea, a feeling, more than an actual person. I began to write and write and write. It poured out of me. Initially there were at least 15 characters. Doctors, priests, crazed friends, lovers, dancers, drug addicts, Nazis and journalists. All of them real people with true stories to tell about Anita's life, and it was a huge mess. Every character sounded the same. They would pop up to tell their story and then vanish into the background. There was no way for an audience to hook into the story because there was no main character. All the stories did was reference Anita, and after a while it became clear that we needed to actually hear from her. I hit a wall, over and over till I threw it all away. Every single piece.

I went back to the source material. I read more books, such as Barbra Ulrich's *Hot Girls of Weimar Berlin* and Peter Gay's *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*), and poured over photographs and images of Sebastian Droste, night club performers, Berlin and World War I. One story stood out to me in particular. One document alleged that when Anita died she was buried in a small grave with little to no fanfare. According to this source, only three people showed up to bury her - a midget, a contortionist, and a transvestite. This image stuck with me for weeks. I couldn't shake that tragically beautiful picture in my head. These three forgotten misfits gathered around a tiny grave in a snow-dusted German forest. The more I tried to brush it away the more questions I had. Who were they? Why were there only three people? What would Anita say? What was their relationship to her? What happened the moment before? What happened to them after? I knew I had the seeds of a show.

I decided I would take a new approach and focus on the three mysterious characters from the gravesite. At 5'11 I knew I couldn't convincingly play a little person, and contortionists, while fascinating and beautiful, require years of training and an entire skillset. That left me with the transvestite character. I figured I could put on a dress, so I went from there. The original character's name was Anka Dorff and she would become the template for Eva Mann in later versions of the script.

At the time I was assigned to write a 30-minute solo piece for a class project. It was to be presented in a staged reading format at the end of the semester. The show I created was titled *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff*. In the piece, Anka Dorff is a transvestite living in 1930s Germany who is mourning the loss of Anita Berber -- a famous personality of the time who had just passed away from tuberculosis of the

spine. Coincidentally, a young writer from America shows up in Germany to interview Anita, only to discover that she has just passed away. He stumbles into Anka at the gravesite and begins asking questions about Anita's life. Anka bristles and sends him away. After a series of encounters Anka finally relents and shares their life story. The audience discovers how intertwined these two characters lives actually are and how the desire to be loved at any cost can distort your perception of reality. The play was primarily a collection of true stories about Anita while Anka served as the device to deliver the history. It was educational and rather unexceptional, but there was a small nugget of artistic potential buried inside.

This class project was raw and unpolished, with too much exposition and forced dialogue with the American writer who never spoke and slowed down the pace. I also felt that it had a far too aggressive ending. Instead of allowing the audience to embrace the character I pushed them away with far too much violence and hatred. Anka Dorff lacked humanity. She was completely insane and borderline evil. I did exactly what I set out not to do, create the evil homosexual stereotype. By the end of the show Anka had raped her daughter, beaten Anita nearly to death, and completely lost her mind.

"Now this is the part, Peter, which you must not judge me for. This is the moment I regret and shall regret till my dying day. Anita was out and I was left home with my thoughts, my cocaine, my gin, and my daughter. In my mind I saw Anita dancing naked in the Lokal letting men fondle her chest. I saw her look at me as she whispered in their ears "I love you, I adore you, I worship you" I don't know if it was all the cocaine or the gin but some thing

cracked. I will not be abused any longer. My whole life one big cycle. I ran and grabbed some cord from the closet and flung open the door to Elise's room. I would take from her what she took from me. I would destroy Anita and ravage Elise. She was screaming. This 15-year-old girl. I tied her to the bedposts. I was stronger than her. The child was crying and kicking but I forced her down. I fucked the body for hours waiting for Anita to come home. Time slipped away and eventually the tears stopped. Elise was gone. I wanted to be found. I want you to see this. I want you to know. Anita stumbled home that evening and brought an audience with her. Goody goody. I removed myself from the child and lunged at her. My mind was gone. She had destroyed me utterly with one fail swoop. OH god the music!!!!!! YOU FUCKING CUNT! YOU ARE WEAK TALENTLESS AND INSANE...I HATE YOU! GET OUT OF MY LIFE YOU WORTHLESS PIECE OF TRASH!!! I scratched at her forehead and eyes. I tore off her white evening gown and dug my nails into her chest drawing blood. She was screaming and crying out. She kicked me into the bed picked up her black riding crop and viciously beat me to the floor lashing my back and face over and over. She used her heels to break my ribs. Suddenly a tall thin man was pulling her off me. He held her back as she swung her arms and legs madly looking like a ravenous bull with glazed over eyes. This man held her down and she stood aloof backed against the wall triumphant and revolting with the riding crop in her hand and blood on her face. That face. Staring at me. Anita.... please. Elise

lay on the bed unmoving and silent. And I felt nothing.” (The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff)

Anka Dorff was Buffalo Bill from *Silence of the Lambs*, she was Peter Boyle in *Swashbuckler*. Yet somehow, I think I had to write that first draft the way I did. I had to get it out of my system. It was such a learning experience that I went to such a dark place so easily because of the cultural stigma subconsciously implanted into my head. It was easy to make Anka bad because that’s what I had been taught – that is how homosexuality had been represented in American culture, through the television, film, and theatre I had watched throughout my life. Despite all of my awareness and work in the LGBTQ community, subconsciously I wrote a metaphorically self-loathing character based on my own insecurities. I had personified my own homosexuality in Anita Berber. When I wrote the section begging and pleading for Anita to get out, I was really speaking to myself and exorcising my own demons. It was eye opening. I never set out to create something so personal, but as a playwright? Dael Orlandersmith once said: “you write about what you know.”

This was probably the most important revelation I had during the entire journey. This was my story. The story of Nick Horan grappling with his identity and voice. It was such a catharsis putting words to my deep feelings, but I knew I had to tone it down.

After the piece finished the audience sat in stunned silence. Nobody knew how to react. It was all too much. I had spat and screamed and spewed hatred and violence all over the stage. Nobody cared. I wanted people to love my character, pity

her, and understand her. Not dismiss her as a murderer and rapist who deserved everything she got. It's not how I wanted to feel about myself.

I threw away 90% of *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff* when I began work on the new show. I boiled it down again. I changed virtually the entire format of the show. Gone were the confused dialogues with an invisible writer, gone was the bar and the hotel room, and the graveyard. I removed her insanity and eliminated the character of Elise, her daughter. What did remain was the drag character, the essence of depravity, the desire to be loved by anyone and everyone at any cost; and, of course, her search for identity. That became the through line of the piece - Anka's and my search to discover truth. All the anger and hatred trickled down, working its way through my body like some giant cleanse, and I re-focused that energy into the new script and a new character.

I realized that the most interesting thing to me was the drag character's relationship to Anita and not Anita herself, so I re-shifted the story to revolve around the life of this troubled artist in a collapsing world. I changed her name from Anka Dorff to Eva Mann to help me differentiate these two people in my mind. Eva is clearly derived from the biblical story of Adam and Eve, Eve being the first woman taken from the rib of Adam. I have always loved this story. It feels distinctly queer to me: a man searching the world for the deliberately removed feminine psyche, a search to be whole again. It's a particularly potent tale for transsexuals. I wanted to evoke this quest for identity in her very name. Mann is far less obscure. Mann is simply referencing her masculinity. I made Eva a performer and set the show in a theatre so that I could talk directly to the audience and to show the relationship between

performing “true” inner identity, theatre and real life, public and private. The audience took the place of Peter, the writer in earlier drafts. It felt more elegant and less clunky. This switch gave me permission to be theatrical in the transitions; it let me move through memory seamlessly and invited the kind of audience interaction I have always desired. In the new show the audience had just arrived in time to see the final performance of Eva Mann’s one-woman extravaganza: Schaul und Rauch or The Sound of Smoke. Of course the editing and tweaking didn’t stop there; there were many months in a rehearsal room with a red pen and a determined scowl ahead of me.

Chapter 2: Collaboration

The collaborative process had to be embraced in order to make *The Sound of Smoke* come together. Designers, Dramaturges, Stage Managers, Directors, Instructors, and Committee members all played a crucial role in the development of this show from conception to completion.

I began this journey alone with just an idea to carry me along. It was easy to brainstorm and devise with no outside voices (other than the characters) in my head pushing and prodding me in one direction or another. *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff* was, as I mentioned before, written for a class project. This meant that when it finally came time to present my writing to my fellow cohort members in class I was forced to shift my paradigm and listen with new ears to their feedback. There is tremendous value in listening to the reactions of others when writing. It is easy to become absorbed in your work and hyper-consumed by your own thoughts that you lose sight of what you are actually trying to communicate to an audience. The cohort helped me realize that I wanted the audience to see some part of themselves reflected in Eva. Her desire to survive and create herself over and over felt palpable to me. These feedback question and answer sessions allowed me to step back and truly assess where my thoughts and writing were stuck and where I was overwriting and overthinking. The relationship between writing and showing became very clear during this period. My tendency was to illustrate a scene as if I was writing a novel. I had Eva describe her setting, her outlook, and all of her emotions. I realized that in theatre we don't need to paint the picture with words; we can show it with our bodies. It's the profound power of visual performance, the ability to create subtext and

duality, a distinctly human characteristic. I set about trying to not just communicate with an audience but also to make them understand, to wake up, to make them question and to disrupt their assumptions and stereotypes, to make human what is sometimes dehumanized in society.

Inspiration seemed to come in spurts and cycles. I would become struck with an idea and write vigorously for a few days, just shaping thoughts and then pouring out ideas onto the page. After this initial period of release I would present the writing for critique. It was great to hear positive feedback, but what I was most interested in was the feedback on sections that were unclear, verbose, or fragmented. Hearing the negative reactions spurred me on to become more specific and detailed. For a long time I had included a set of twins in *The Sound of Smoke*. They functioned as backup support in scenes taking on various roles throughout the play. They also served as modern day society commenting on the scene through song and dance. I loved the idea of these 2 creepy twins hovering just out of sight adding their two cents in every now and then. They would also have served as comedic relief at times, posing as trees or furniture for Eva to sit on. I had written entire scenes between Eva and a twin talking about transvestism, transsexuality, and the lengths to which they would go to achieve their ideal. However through this process of writing, presenting, and revision I discovered that I didn't need them; that while I loved the idea of them, they didn't move the plot forward in any real way. In the end I had to cut them from the script because I knew I could be stronger without them.

This feedback helped me realize my potential, as well as the potential of the Anita-Eva character. Now I am not saying that it was easy to make that kind of

significant cut; in fact, it was quite the opposite. After hearing those kinds of observations, instead of diving back into writing immediately I found it most helpful to sit on the reviews and let them simmer and trickle down. Sometimes 2 weeks would pass before I would even begin to consider writing again. Once I had gained some distance from my writing and boiled down the feedback to its essential core I was ready to begin the cycle over again - feverishly writing and editing, presenting, thinking, waiting, then writing again. I now understand how a playwright or an author could take years to develop a new work. Time seems to be such a crucial element to the creative writing process. If I look at the macro-writing picture I see the same pattern between the two versions of the show. In “The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff” I was convinced that I had hit theatrical gold, and yet after just a few months time that entire concept and direction felt stale and immature. Perhaps in time I will feel the same way about *The Sound of Smoke*. Not that I don’t love what I’ve created, because I do; I just think there will be a new revelation about the piece which will begin opening those creative windows again. That’s a big question for me moving forward: When do you know it’s done? I feel like I could keep working and tweaking and adding to *The Sound of Smoke* forever. Perhaps its just experience telling you enough is enough. Maybe the windows never open again.

By the time that the designers got involved in the process I had already been working on the piece for a little less than 2 years. I truly think this was one of the major reasons for my success. I chose to stick with a project I was already deeply versed in, as opposed to starting from scratch with a new and less formed concept. When we all first met around the table to talk inspirations I was able to be extremely

clear and direct about what exactly I needed, the aesthetics I wanted, and the inspirations I used. I really tried to give the designers something concrete to sink their teeth into as they moved forward. This was a big learning moment for me. Designers need clear, direct, and full inspiration in order to give you exactly what you want. There was never a moment when talking about my show that I felt like we were on separate pages.

Flexibility was another crucial component to this project. These designers had 7 shows to juggle all at once and as a result sacrifices had to be made. I found that as opposed to getting tight over changes made I needed to release into them and go with the flow. I tried to incorporate the new design aesthetic into my show and be as open to suggestions as possible while still maintaining the integrity of my work. It was a tricky balance, but I feel I was successful in the end.

I also collaborated with some of the PhD candidates from The School of Theatre Dance and Performance Studies. I partnered with Khalid Long to reach out to various LGBTQ organizations across The University of Maryland in order to get the word out about the show. Together we wrote a short letter to be mailed out:

Peace and Blessings,

My name is Khalid Long and I am a doctoral student in the department of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies. I am currently working as an assistant for a production that may be of interest to you:

Nick Horan, a 3rd year M.F.A. in Performance candidate at UMD's School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies is presenting his thesis as part of the school's Festival of New Works: "*The Sound of Smoke*." Set in 1930's Germany, the audience will witness an environment of glorious decay right on the edge of collapse as they follow a transsexual who loved too hard and lost it all in the search for her identity at the end of the world. Using projections and shadow play, this theatrical event challenges the audience's conception of sexuality, truth and identity.

We sent the letter to:

LGBTQ Equity Center
Bisexuals at Maryland (BAM)
Bro2Bro
Hamsa
oSTEM
Pride Alliance
Queer Grads
Safe Space Discussion
SmithOUT
Trans U
True Colors of Maryland (TCOM)
Women2Women

I also worked with Elisabeth Therese Fallica to learn more about burlesque movement and style. She sent me video of specific forms of burlesque that were applicable to the time period in the show. I would like to now know more about burlesque after seeing some of the movement styles and images, and will consider developing that element for future performances.

Chapter 3: Rehearsal

At the start of this process I had not yet lined up a director and was facing the daunting task of running the room alone and directing myself, a task I did not feel capable of completing. The initial plan was to set up my laptop and film myself working a scene, and then go back watch the video and make the necessary adjustments. This proved to be an abysmal failure. The laptop only captured a section of the room and the quality wasn't very good. Next I attempted to watch myself in the mirror as I rehearsed, but that didn't work either. I couldn't focus on actually performing because I was too busy adjusting and correcting what I was seeing. The distraction was too great. Eventually I just gave up and used my actor awareness to feel my way through the show. I developed some rudimentary blocking and worked on memorizing my 30-page monologue.

It should be said that a solo show is rarely a solo journey. It really depends on a community of artists, other eyes, other ideas, and support, to make it happen and realize it fully; that you must, at some point, trust and ask for help. This is something that I struggle with. Asking for help has always felt like a defeat to me. In my mind, asking for help signals to others that you can't handle it alone. Fortunately I had a strong support system that never made me feel like I was burdening them. My wonderful committee and stage management team were instrumental in the development of *The Sound of Smoke*. I was forced to acknowledge the collaborative nature of theatre. Nothing can be created in a vacuum.

Memorization became a major challenge. I knew my success would hinge on whether or not I felt comfortable onstage. This comfort would stem primarily from my ease with the text. I never wanted to feel lost, like I didn't know where to go next. In a solo show it's only you on stage and if you lose yourself there is nobody around to help you get back on track. I refused to allow that to happen. I repeated the text over and over out loud, in my head, running, pacing, sitting, any way I could drill it into my body. I was surprised how quickly it came to me. I was able to find the essence of the line because I knew the thought of the character - I had written her! I never got lost because deep down I knew where she was going. That was one of the biggest surprises to me during the rehearsal process. All of the anxiety washed away once I realized that I knew this text better than any other text I'd ever read or memorized.

Flash forward to halfway through the rehearsal time. I felt stale. There was only so far that I could take myself without an outside eye to help shape and guide me. One of my cohort members, Anu Yadav, suggested that I contact Raymond Caldwell based on her prior experience working with him. Raymond held a high level position at Arena Stage working in new play development. He graduated with his MFA from Ohio State and specialized in solo and devised work. Raymond stepped in as a director and, more importantly, reflector responder. This meant that he mirrored back to me what he was observing in the room that way we could stay true to my voice and intention throughout. It was very important to both of us that *The Sound of Smoke* remain my creation. In rehearsals he would comment on what he saw and then

offer suggestions on how to navigate the particular issues he saw. He helped me refine and specify my voice in the piece.

I wanted to somehow incorporate audience participation and interaction to increase the humor and intensity of the show. Raymond and my committee members then suggested that to do this, I needed to have fun.... Raymond said to me “Girl, as long as you are having fun on stage, the audience will have fun with you! That’s all we want!” I can’t begin to express how much I needed to hear that. I had lost the joy, the little twinkle in my eye. I knew that if I were going to make this character work and find her humanity she would need to lighten up and find the humor in life. I worked hard at making Eva joyous in the short time I had before the run, which I believe was important for connecting with an audience.

Chapter 4: Technical Rehearsal

Tech week arrived and I came prepared. I knew exactly what I wanted and how I wanted it to look. I had been rehearsing with my stage manager all of the technical elements for weeks so he knew all of the lighting and sound cues. My show was also projection heavy. I was inspired by Lemieux Pilon 4D Art, a professional theatre company from France who use projections as an integral part of their storytelling. I wanted to interact with the projections in the space as a second character. It was an ambitious idea and one that was perhaps a bit too complicated for this festival set up. Once in the theatre space it became quite clear that my mind was more imaginative than what was physically realistic in the space. I had to compromise on my original concept and settle for what they could give me. It was a major hurdle that I had to overcome during tech. Since I couldn't get the desired look I decided to ask for a great deal of specificity in my projection design, which if I were given the chance to do again I think I would ask them to go further. I wanted the projections to line up in very specific places on very specific cues. It was quite difficult to achieve the seamless effect I wanted with only one day of technical rehearsal in the space.

Another complication was that my director, Raymond Caldwell, was unable to make it to my tech rehearsal. I had no outside eye in the room. Fortunately one of my cohort members, Anu Yadav, stepped in and stood in for me on stage so that I could see light levels and make decisions with the designers. I really enjoyed playing with stage composition with the designers. I asked a number of times for fairly specific

looks, which they were able to give me. I think that was partially why my show looked so very different from any of the others presented during the festival: I demanded the design to come to a certain level and they delivered. All of this would have been a nearly impossible task without Anu Yadav in the room standing in for me on stage. I learned the value and importance of having a director in the room to help guide the process.

Chapter 5: What Worked & What Didn't

The Sound of Smoke was the culmination of my entire artistic journey at The University of Maryland. I feel like I had more successes in the show than failures. I really love the final script. I think it's clear and yet still mysterious and the conflict is there the whole way through. The character of Eva Mann truly experiences a transformation and goes on a journey, which leaves her in a very different place at the end of the show. I adore how the costumes turned out, as well as the lighting and sound. Those elements felt really spot-on and helped tell the story I wanted to tell. My collaborations with the director Raymond Caldwell and all of the designers felt well executed and friendly, and I never felt like I was stepping on anyone's toes. I learned a lot about my own performance and what it takes to sustain an audience's attention for an hour alone on stage. I feel that I often got caught up in the moment and ended up pushing some as an actor. Pushing refers to the practice of over acting and exaggerating for the sake of the audience. Pushing is getting wrapped up in the energy of the voyeur and losing the rehearsed emotion. It's such a tricky line. It is so easy to be bitten by the performance fairy once you step out on stage. The swell of the audience is intoxicating and while it can be a powerful tool when harvested correctly, it can also blow an actor's entire performance. It is crucial to remain focused when in front of an audience. I certainly wish I could have had the opportunity to settle into the character with an audience. Each time I performed there was new stimuli and fresh things to try. Experimenting each night really helped me find those small successes. Over time I think I could relax and let go of the adrenaline and simply be with the audience in an honest and genuine way.

I know the choreography was intensely weak in the show. I would love to return to it and really make something period specific for right after the transformation. I'd also spend more time on developing specificity in the accents. The idea for the German accent came from the desire to differentiate the transition from Eva to Anita half way through the show beyond what the costume and physicality could provide. I wanted a clear shift in sound as well as look when Eva consumed Anita. I can achieve this by simply spending more rehearsal time on the accent and transcribing the text using I.P.A.

If I were to do the show again I would love to flesh the story out a bit more and make it a full-length piece. I have two ideas. First I'd put the transformation right at intermission so that the audience is left in suspense right before act II. In the second half, I'd take more time developing Eva and Anita's success so that when they lose everything it is all the more painful. I would also bring the father back in the second act as an antagonist for Eva to fight against. I could reintroduce the twins and really spend some time developing their characters. I still want to know whom they are and what they have to say in this work. The second idea is to leave the show exactly as it is and simply expand it. I'd tack on an intermission and then remove all of the makeup and perform the second act as a man living his life on the run from the Nazis. At the moment I am leaning toward the original idea for its cleanliness and ease of transition. I will probably write both in the coming weeks.

Eva emerges in the final performance as a half-baked cookie emerges from an ill heated oven. I need more time in the actual piece to completely flush her out. She isn't finished baking. I want to add more of who she was before she became Eva and

more of what the repercussions were for becoming Eva. I want to know when she discovered she was different? What was growing up like with this secret? I want the character to conjure images of Judy Garland and Dorian Corey, a desperate soul who was misrepresented before the world, clinging to the last vestiges of reality. I feel that I succeeded in creating a character outside of the stereotypical homosexual trope. Eva was a real person. She failed in her life and most importantly realized it. In the end she has to live with her choices. In the future I would want to see her struggle with that and make her peace.

Unfortunately I didn't receive many audience questionnaires back. The ones I did receive were overwhelmingly positive and had little constructive information on them. "Nick Horan is a GOD!" is not all helpful to anything other than my ego, which I assure you, needs no further inflation at this juncture.

Chapter 6: The Future

As I move forward after graduation from The University of Maryland I intend to continue working on the script for *The Sound of Smoke* and present it again at various festivals across the country. As I mentioned before, I see what was presented in February as a works in progress and as the first act of something bigger. I have so many ideas flying through my head at this moment and I am excited to put them down on paper.

LGBTQ issues are a hot button topic at this moment in our country's political climate. Gay rights debates are peppering every late night pundit show and are being discussed around kitchen tables across America. I feel a real and honest shift in desire to hear more of these stories. *The Sound of Smoke* is poised to respond to this need with its candid look at human desire and failings. I hope to show that Eva Mann is more than the sum of her parts by allowing people to identify with her humanity and her desire to be loved and remembered beyond her time.

I see myself touring this two-act one-man show with a suitcase and a wig stand across the country telling the story of this incredible person to whoever will listen.

The Final Script

The Sound of Smoke

By Nick Horan

Top of show. Bare stage. Ticking clock.

Music begins to play and in silhouette behind a scrim we see EVA putting make up on getting ready. Powder puffs and stockings go on. The final touch is the wig. She rises and stands for a moment the perfect embodiment of sexuality. Gazing over her self she calms her nerves and strikes a pose.

During this a projection of a child running and laughing in slow motion is seen and heard. Like a ghost. Quick and light. The audience should question what they saw.

A dim quavering Child's voice over.

CHILD VOICE OVER

For every evil under the sun
There is a remedy or there is none.
If there be one, seek till you find it;
If there be none, never mind it.

As she finishes the child fades away and the show begins.

Stepping out from SL vom.

EVA

Bon Souir! Good evening! Ladies and gentlemen this is a tremendous night. This is the night of your baptism in sin, your release from goodliness, your confirmation in debauchery! Free yourself from the rumors you've heard, the unimaginable lies. This is Wahrheit Nacht, My name is Eva Mann. Welcome to my mind.

Music

EVA

Lets start things off with a bang. It is 1936, the year of our lord, and you my virtuous pagans can count yourselves amongst the lucky few to have stumbled into this decadent whorehouse for the farewell performance of my one-woman extravaganza, Schall und Rauch.

This is my East Berlin, where the women are hot and the men are hotter. The streets teem with diamond rats and roaches in fur coats. Gutters and goblets full of golden piss and whorehouses where you can get a sponge cake and a spanking for just a Reichspfennig. Keep the doors closed, in here you won't be caught. The Third Reight reopened this little gem for the Olympics, so have a drink while you can ladies and gentleman. Lets jump in. Stability is the final refuge of the unimaginative.

Look at all, 10 of you! Mmmhm hmmm! If I knew it was this easy to get a crowd I would have murdered her years ago!

Oh don't worry my darlings. I'm an apathetic sociopath - I'd only kill you if I cared.

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EVA

Ladies and gentlemen you are probably wondering how this internationally rejected performance mysterium ended up in a swastika shit-storm like this.

Well it's a long story sweets.

I suppose it begins at the end of the world with the devil herself.

Anita Berber. The red headed priestess of depravity.

V.O.

(Whispered) Anita Anita Anita

EVA

She was a star. No really she was. She starred in 26 films, hundreds of live dance performances where she pushed the boundaries of art and human expression. And she could smell a hard cock from across a crowded room. Great at parties.

So in an effort to please the masses and pay homage to my beloved mentor, tonight ill be recreating her expressionistic movements entirely without consent from any of the aforementioned parties. Not seen on the Berlin stage in years.

The first is called The Dance of Vice Horror and Ecstasy

Nazi siren is heard and the lights go out. After a bit the siren ends

Suddenly in the darkness we see a silver projected column of smoke rise from the ground. The smoke swirls and for a moment it looks like a human form. Then it vanishes.

The lights flicker on to find Eva huddled on the floor, haunted. Lights out once more. In the darkness we hear the crackle and scratch of the record player. An old creepy jazz number rattles out.

EVA

Oh god she's here.

You know what puppets? I don't think I can do this tonight. Tonight calls for a very special...Ahhhhh the memories.

She pulls out a syringe from a trunk and injects her self with some substance.

Suddenly joyous. Music. She begins to dance.

The ghost child is back, this time silently watching EVA dance.

She acknowledges the child and the image goes up in smoke.

She is swept up. The scene changes and we are in a dim space. A window is projected way up in the top corner of the space. Distant and unreachable.

EVA

I am ten years old and my world is like the pictures. Not in the glamorous way but in the flat grey once white sort of fashion. You see darlings my father, god rest his filigree soul, is a baker. Everything we own is dusted in a fine layer of white powder. Not unlike my current life but in a very different sort of fashion. My father is the type of man who bakes cheap bread, more flat than fluffy, more grey than brown, not out of choice but necessity. You should have seen the mounding pink cake monstrosities of my youth! Hahahaha! We own a tiny grey once white box on the corner of Market Street in Hoxton and we sleep above the shop in a minuscule grey room once white on chipped wire frame mattresses, and pillows filled with flour and dreams. In the cold nights I nuzzle up next to his huge body savoring the warmth and comfort of his drunken whispers. All his fears and longings poured into the upper antitragus of my tiny grey earlobe.

I love him.

Eva jumps up and runs to the counter.

EVA

Every morning once the thin grey once white workers would trudge off to work their plump grey once white wives would emerge from the sanctuary of their own grey once white boxes and scurry down to our shop and hungrily buy up our meager stock of loaves. As quickly as they arrived, laid their money down, they were gone. Back to the tiny boxes to slice and shove butterbread sandwiches with perhaps, if they are feeling naughty, a slice of grey cheese down their coated gullets.

This is how I spent my days covered in grey soot from the ovens selling bread
upfront while my father drank what few profits we made in the back.

This was not the life of the worlds next Emil Jannings! This was not the life of the
next Deitrich! Far from.

Now my mother had either died or left, or simply never existed. I for one chose
to believe that I was spontaneously gifted upon the world by baby Jesus. Which
is far more glamorous than admitting to your self that your mother was a whore.

Either way my father never spoke of her in a sober state. The most I ever
discovered was through his drunken night terrors and of course the chest.

*Lights illuminate a small greyish chest on stage. Eva goes to pick it up and blows
off the flour dust.*

EVA

My beautiful father kept a small grey once white chest tucked in the corner of the
room since I could remember. Staring at me. The tantalizing draw of it sitting
there across from our cold bodies night after night. It was locked tight, but one
day when my father had stepped out to acquire more gin I put out for the key.
Searching high and low I found it tucked inside a cupboard behind some canned
cannellini beans and dried sugar paste.

Inside the box was more than I could have imagined and so much less than I
expected. There was a single light blue crepe gown folded and tucked intricately,
delicately nuzzling a pair of blue satin pumps with daisy buckles and worn black
lining. They smelled....*(she smells)*....intoxicating.

I happen to think that dancing is the best thing for the human condition. Don't
you?

My earliest memory is watching the street performers sing and dance on the corner from my dusty 3rd floor window. Cranking their own music, I would watch the women flip their hair across their shoulders and move their hips to the notes of the music. I would recreate their slow jerky movements to my private audience. Arm, leg, hip, arm, leg, hip I was performing for kings and queens, feeling the heat from the foot lamps on my bare and bruised shins, the flour smudges became grease paint, and I was no longer myself but something far more spectacular.

There is a noise like her father coming home. Eva rushes to replace and relock the relics and restore the chest where it was found.

EVA

It became my little secret. Like some fabulous painter had pierced the grey clouds, dipped his brush in the sky, and painted some fleck of color into my grey once white life.

Sound of a bomb being dropped. The sounds of planes fly across the space.

Eva

Ladies and gentleman of the Silhouette Club: "The Great War."

VOICE OVER OF SOME ENGLISH OFFICIAL

At this grave moment in our national history I send to you and, through you, to the officers and men of the fleets, the assurance of my confidence that under your direction they will renew the old glories of the Royal Navy, and prove once again the sure shield of Britain and of her Empire in the hour of trial.'

Germany tried to bribe us with peace to desert our friends and duty. But Great Britain has preferred the path of honor.

During this speech Eva stands and waltzes around the space.

EVA

I was fifteen when my beautiful, soiled, and drunken father was shipped into his Majesty's service. Conscription. I lay in the rubble of our doorway looking out at the black once grey streets. The smoke gently swirling and rising around me.

The ghost is back. Beckoning her forward. Is it the soldier? Is it Anita? It's hard to tell.

EVA

A handsome British officer has arrived to escort me away to some orphan camp.

What was left for me in that shop? The Patrons had all gone to fight, and my father abducted into inky blackness. What was left but my fury? Incapable of doing anything, they marched me down the rubble street I remembered. The shoes.

Please! Please let be go back! I need to grab something. Please! Please sirs!

They keep walking.

PLEASE!!

The ghost vanishes

EVA

I never saw my father again.

Of the shoes for that matter.

Pause. Compose.

She sits on the Chez.

EVA

I escaped the orphanage just in time for my 18th birthday and left England with
the conscription tucked into my back left pocket.

The German dance hall music begins faintly in the background.

EVA

The Weimer Republic calls.

The music transitions into a train.

EVA

I'm in a small train compartment traveling from Hamburg to Berlin. Reading a
paper and hallucinating gloriously.

*The ghost of Anita materializes clearly for the first time. Mysterious. Sensuously she
looks at EVA. Knowing some dark secret.*

EVA

My god. Anita. She is here.

*The projection Anita swirls around EVA and pulls her upwards. Beckoning. An
electric spark.*

EVA

Maybe it was the illegal pills or the gin or the opium but I feel dizzy and she sits
down right next to me and puts her arms around me. Like a true gentleman. And
I fall into that fiery embrace.

Anita slides down on top of Eva and presses her mouth against hers.

*A swirl of smoke and the train is gone.
All that is left is Anita's wicked cackle wafting through the air. Eva is alone once
more. The ghost vanished*

For a long time I thought I wanted to be a nun. It was then that I realized that
what I really wanted to be was a lesbian.

I think she saw my potential. The fabulous potential that I have achieved sitting
here in front of you. Only 2 years older than I at the time. 20. Vibrant and elusive.
Anita was headed to Berlin and so was I.

*The greyness of England is replaced by the opulence of Berlin. Train sounds which
blend into applause and street noises, clapping and laughter.
Flash bulbs*

EVA

We live in a marvelous time. The end of the world.

*The space transforms into lavish night club. The entire space is filled with dim
twinkling lights and swirls of purple smoke. The audience is illuminated slowly
through out this scene. They are all transported.*

The bond was instantaneous and Berlin was divine. The freedom, the luxury, the
decadence. It was an age for children's children and the plumbing of dark
orifices. It was the Weimar Republic, Anita was the eminence supreme, and I was
her child.

During this next moment it lightly begins to snow on stage. Projections.

EVA

We went on outings, outings to see the most Avant garde performers, our heads were spinning. We'd go to little holes in the wall. Nobodies who Anita would absolutely worship. Anita was done. It was all she could take. It seemed to overpower her and the whole way home she would be running about and screaming like a mad woman of truth and life and the birth of a whole new movement. These nights inspired her so. I loved being there for that. Drunk on champagne she would pull me close and kiss me hard, tell me she loved me, adored me, her black lipstick smearing my mouth leaving a clown like grin across my stubbled cheek. I feel the greasy paint with my fingers and something is awakened in me.

Music similar to the childhood shoes dance. Faint and far off. The projection of snow swirls around her for an instant accompanied by Anita's giggle. Like magic.

EVA

For the first few months, it went splendidly. That is the most unhappy part of an unhappy love. It begins with extravagant happiness.

EVA

Anita would drag me along to the most expensive hotels where she would perform in the lobby. (She called them expressionistic life displays. I called her a slut.) Standing in the lobby of the hotel Adulon she would remove all her clothes and sing the German national anthem while a monkey, she smuggled in under her coat, would hang from her neck and shit on her chest. Then half glaring and half seducing, she would turn around, pick up the soiled clothes and walk naked into the cold winter storm.

These are the sort of sensational stories you hoped to hear, but the truth is far more dangerous. What most people don't know is that she kept going back and repeating the performance, it was like she was stuck on a loop. She did it so often that the monkey asphyxiated one night under the coat and dropped dead right then and there. That evening she left the corpse on the floor. It's clear now that it was the first sign something was wrong. The obsessive compulsion.

why do it over and over darling?

Stop for a moment.

Stop.

Look at me!

Goes and grabs a hand mirror. Sits DSR

EVA

I can tell you first hand that Anita despised all men. "Shiite" she would say. Even me. She thought even less of women, particularly ladies who were titillated by her lesbian affairs. And she was equally bored with spectators, who believed in her androgyny or the ambiguity of her sex. This is the cold hard truth of Anita Berber. When Anita danced she was alive in her true erotic sphere, sex. She alone was subject to the magnetism of her own sexual charge. She got off on it.

An audience could hear her moans and screams of ecstasy while she was dancing, twirling before our eyes. Yes I danced with Anita Berber. I danced with her, loved her, hated her, But, performing with Anita was like sharing the stage with the sun, the moon, and the earth all at once. How could I possibly compete with that?

The projection of the child returns. In the blue shoes.

We became inseparable. She proceeded to make me her willing sex-slave. I mean how could I resist her? She was irrational and alive and the perfect embodiment of everything that age stood for. Anita and I lived happily together in orgasmic union. I was falling in love with this German vamp. Of course it was Anita who got me hooked on the astonishing menu of illicit narcotics, smuggled from Hamburg and Paris. Anita would load our indelicate bloodstreams daily with hashish and opium, morphine injections, cocaine powders, absinthe, and a chloral hydrate-ether concoction. Lovely. She was also the one who gave me my name Eva Mann.

EVA

I bought a wig and heels and since there was no time to diet, I had my heart removed.

The ghost of Anita returns and kills the child. Anita looks at Eva and vanishes. EVA Screams and clutches her heart. As if something has been ripped out. Unaware of Anita's actions. Composes herself, slides on a fur coat and continues.

EVA

And the corset fit perfectly. Yes darlings that is how you have this shining Tower of Babel in front of you. This paragon of duplicity.

Slide the needle in and off we go.

She injects herself.

*Ghost Anita returns dancing and the foot lights flare the sound of a cheering audience as she works them into frenzy
Eva is standing of the side watching and observing all this. Mirroring a move every now and then.*

EVA

I became her protégé. I followed her. Soaked her, absorbed her, blood sweat and cum. While She performed in sleazy dance halls, back stage I would watch and mirror her every movement. Tracing her body with mine. Arm, leg, hip, arm, leg, hip. I wanted more than anything else in the world to be just like Anita.

You know Marlene Dietrich is famous, well, so is Anita Berber, in a sense so am I. But a very much different quantity. No magazine is going to run up a cover on me if I go to a premier. But it's still a fame, a small fame. But you absorb it you take it. And you like it. You like the adulation, the applause. The people cheering you on, the love. Its like uh a physical high, you know it's a good high it's an addictive high like all highs in the long run try to be, and seldom are. And I want more.

Eva runs on stage and Anita looks at Eva and Vanishes in a puff of smoke. All the lights and music are gone. Eva is alone on stage.

EVA

It's never enough. It will never be enough. Come to me my sweet. Anita my darling. Shhhh shhhhhh. Dance with me.

I need it. I need...

She injects her self once more.

Music blares.

The ghost Anita materializes at Eva's command and begins to waltz with her.

Slowly hundreds of smoke ghosts appear on the stage. Observing. Watching.

Whispering.

EVA

Selfish selfish Anita.

Beautiful woman.

Whore

Slut

Filth

My love

I want you

I

Need

You

To

Love

ME

In a mad furry Eva then kills Anita. Projections of red blood splatter across the set.

Anita's body vanishes.

EVA slows her movement. Stumbles slightly and coughs. Regains some semblance of her composure, and rounds on the audience. The two looking at each other. suddenly Anita's huge eyes fill the stage. Blinking and staring intensely out at the audience.

EVA steps out under the giant eyes. She contorts and languishes as the eyes shift to a large body twisting projected on top of her body. After a period of anguish she bursts into smoke. And is gone.

In the darkness and smoke these words are projected:

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And

Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man shall cleave

unto woman: and they shall be one flesh. They were both naked, and were not
ashamed.

We hear Eva in voice over. During the biblical passage

EVA

What a powerful tool delusion is.

I must make a choice.

Reality is often pathetic.

*Into the blackness and smoke we see a naked form standing. Slowly the figure is
dressed in Anita's clothing. The last piece is the red wig. The actor whips around
and we see Eva as Anita. She strikes a pose and the Eyes collapse into the figure.
The transformation is complete. Eva has blood on her hands that remains for the
rest of the show.*

EVA

LOVE ME DARLINGS hahahahaha!!

I have uncovered the truth.

She injects herself

EVA

Slide the needle in, And the show goes on.

Anita and I are a hit. Mixing intrigue and sex like no one on the Berlin Strauss!

Otto dix paints our picture and I am a star!

Flash of light bulbs

*Projections of glorious red curtains appear. Foot lights flare and we are on stage
once more.*

EVA

Ladies and Gentleman, The Silhouette Club presents: "Our act."

We suddenly see the opening of Eva and Anita's show.

EVA

We twist, and twirl. All of mother's lessons come flooding back. And nobody can tell the difference! The audience is lusting, the time is burning, the lights are shining, and the blood washes away. It's a tricky business, surviving your dreams. You must be careful not to drown in them.

EVA

I leave Germany and travel the world. We are billed together, well she is the headliner but I perform as well.

The Act continues. Repeating the same movements over and over. Dancing Music the hustle and bustle. Light bulb flashes.

EVA

Citizens across Europe know our name. We are treated to expensive dinners by gigolos and perverts. Lavish parties in our honor and money to buy the most lavish gowns, wigs, and shoes. Fountains of absinthe and heroine keep us thin and strung out. Orgies and bathhouses, disease. It was everything I could have ever dreamed of.

And it was killing Anita. Literally beginning to eat her from the inside out. She hated the show. I don't know why. In fact I think she hated me most of all.

No.

She realized she needed me. She realized that I had surpassed her. That I had become everything she could never achieve.

And who was surprised?

You?

Ha.

Her tits no longer had bounce in them. So I take up the flack when she is too weak to stand.

The dance gets more and more frantic

EVA

I perform the nudie shows and take the patrons for a romp after the performance. Make a little money on the side to support the heavy cocaine. Soon enough Anita is all but gone. Her face is a mess of abscesses and her arms are like cheese cloth. She can't bathe or dress herself. A burden.

But I love this.

I live for this.

The stage the lights the applause. I keep on. Smiling sucking, and fucking.

Music stops. Eva coughs. She collapses. Lights a cigarette.

EVA

We are institutionalized in Paris after a severe bout of pneumonia.

Time to go home my pet.

Transition back to Berlin but it is very different. The lights and the feel are all very shuddered. On the back wall projected we see barbed wire fences and rubble.

VOICE OVER

I wish to explore a few ideas on the subject of homosexuality. It is essential to realize that if we allow this infection to continue in Germany without being able to fight it, it will be the end of Germany, of the Germanic world. It is vital we rid

ourselves of them; like a weed we must pull them up, throw them on the fire and burn them. This is not out of a spirit of vengeance, but of necessity; these creatures must be exterminated.

Silence.

EVA

Routine is the death of sensation.

6 years have passed and when I return Berlin is no longer the same city I left. The Third Reich is born, and Hitler's face is plastered on every billboard. How that man became so popular with such a face I'll never understand. It takes hours to look like this darling and I'm performing for you shitheads. I should have combed it all over and glued a toothbrush to my upper lip years ago. Maybe I'd be sitting in the chancellor's seat right now.

Regardless, the growing political tensions have shut down all of my favorite bars, and lokals. I suddenly have lost my appeal. A relic from another time.

Another war is brewing. I can smell it.

EVA

You know, fame is an illusive thing -- here today, gone tomorrow. The fickle, shallow mob raises its heroes to the pinnacle of approval today and hurls them into oblivion tomorrow at the slightest whim; utter forgetfulness in a few months.

I scraped by selling myself to who ever would take me. Oh don't look disgusted pets. I've seen you out there too. Looking in the windows fantasizing. Hoping and dreaming for one night with the legendary Eva Mann. Well If I'm such a legend, then why am I so lonely? Let me tell you, legends are all very well if you've got somebody around who loves you.

Pathetic Dance begins.

3 more years of waiting, pressing directors and theatre managers to let me dance, let me live. Nobody has come to see an expressionistic dance in years they say. No way to fill a house and with the austerity measures. Cast out like Lucifer from heaven. Still I go on. I must.

I'm on the corner cranking my own music with a hat out for change.

Pathetic dance continues. Music skips.

Continues on. Music skips again. She falls.

Silence for perhaps the first time in the whole show. Lights down to a dim flicker.

Breathing.

EVA

It's august outside and from my little Westinghouse radio drones the German national anthem.

Silence. The quiet buzz of the radio.

EVA

Do you remember that night 100 years ago when we kissed in the snow? Do you remember it sweets? I were dancing on the edge of a volcano.

She is illuminated by the faint glow of the radio. Just a huddled trembling shape in the darkness. She injects herself again.

EVA

Hahahahaha oh you beauty. What has happened to you? Lets fix your frock. There. There. Aren't you gorgeous! Give us a kiss.

EVA

Ohhh listen pet The Olympic Games. Adolf is speaking.

*We hear the national anthem and a recording of Hitler's Olympics speech. Eva lays
in a crumpled mess on the floor.*

She laughs and begins coughing.

EVA

It's the end of the world and the beginning of a new age. A great Aryan power.

She hums along with the Olympic song.

V.O.

Whispered

Anita, Anita, Anita

I've got an audition today. oh yes they practically begged me to come in. It was really rather pathetic. But. The silhouette club! I mean, we haven't played the silhouette in years. It's all a matter of time. We'll be riding high again puppet.

Don't you fret. It's all a matter of time.

It's all a matter of time...

EVA struggles not to weep.

The child re-appears. Observing.

Eva rises and looks around at all of the "things" on the wall. All of the relics and trunks and costumes and feathers. She looses it for a moment and runs to the wall and begins ripping things off of it till she finds the fur coat.

During this Eva puts on the fur coat and strikes a pose. It's shaky and far less confident. Her feeble attempt to regain some control. It fails.

EVA

Oh god.

VOICE OVER

Paragraph 175: A male who commits a sex offense with another male or allows himself to be used by another male for a sex offense shall be punished with imprisonment in internment camp.

Paragraph 176: An unnatural sex act committed by humans with animals is punishable by imprisonment in internment camp

Paragraph 177: Any Homosexual asocials caught shall be punished with imprisonment in internment camp.

“These people will obviously be publicly degraded and dismissed and handed over to the court. After...they will be...taken into a concentration camp and in the camp they will be shot”

She collapses and weeps while hearing this. Eva feels herself up and down and casts off the tattered fur coat. Touching her face she feels her lips and the heavy paint. She attempts to wipe it off only smearing it into a clown like grin.

EVA

You Bitch.

How did I become mixed up in your company?

You're the prince of lies, you're the devil who stole me. corrupted me, whored me out like some madam of the night. I don't know who I am any more. Both of us trapped in this icy grave of a body gnawing and mashing our teeth.

I don't want to die.
I want to rejoin the world.
And you are going to get me killed. You're going to get us both killed. Get out.
GET OUT OF ME!

She rises makes a decision, removes the dress, shoes, and wig. Naked she turns to the audience for the first time in the show.

She realizes something. The projection of Anita rises and vanishes.

Sweet childlike music plays. Innocence from the bakery. During this next part projected splatters of red cover the set, It's Eva. When the lights refocus on Eva she's bleeding.

The projection of Anita's eyes return hovering over her crumpled form. We faintly see the ghostly shape of Anita's body swell up and out of Eva's.

EVA

I am free.

My beloved.

The ghost Anita fades and swirls away to nothingness.

During this next moment the hazy projection of a child running and laughing in slow motion is seen and heard. Like a ghost.

CHILD VOICE OVER

One, two, police
Three, four, officer
five, six, old witch

seven, eight, good night!

nine, ten, good-bye

The child projection holds EVA in his arms. Then he melts into her. The two becoming one again. A first breath.

She reaches into the chest on stage and pulls out the blue shoes wrapped in the dress. She unravels them delicately and removes a faded pink scrap of fabric from inside one of the shoes.. She trembles as she flattens it. It is a pink triangle. Looking so delicate and soft in her worn hand.

She just sits there staring at the shape. At a loss.

EVA

I've got this...last week....

Is this what, is this all I am? How did it come to this?

The Gestapo alarms begin to ring once more in the distance growing stronger through the rest of the play.

EVA

They're coming

She stands holding her mothers dress. Looking at the audience pleading as the sirens grow louder. Suddenly a huge bang on the doors. EVA freezes and listens. Another knock. She drops the dress and the triangle in a heap. She turns and runs out of the space naked. It begins to softly snow. The Gestapo sirens build to crescendo then suddenly a return to the Ticking clock as in the top of the show.

BLACKOUT

Appendices



Anka Dorff in *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff*



Anka Dorff in *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff*



The Set for The MFA Festival of New Works



Costume Rendering *The Sound of Smoke*
Eva Mann



Costume Rendering *The Sound of Smoke*
Anita Berber



Eva Mann in *The Sound of Smoke*



Anka Dorff in *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff*



Anka Dorff in *The Life and Lies of Anka Dorff*



Eva Mann in *The Sound of Smoke*



Eva Mann in *The Sound of Smoke*



Eva Mann as Anita Berber in *The Sound of Smoke*



Eva Mann as Anita Berber in *The Sound of Smoke*



Eva Mann as Anita Berber in *The Sound of Smoke*



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Eva Mann in *The Sound of Smoke*



Eva Mann in *The Sound of Smoke*

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